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ABSTRACT

The change in family structure precipitated by divorce, separation, death and other parental absences often creates psychological, social and economic problems for some individuals. Of specific interest to school counselors are findings about the effect of changed family structure on children's in-school behavior. The effectiveness of structured group counseling (SGC) treatment, bibliotherapy group (BG) treatment and placebo treatment were examined for junior high school students (N=48) from changing families on the variables of: (1) feelings about treatment; (2) knowledge of problems of the changing family; (3) behavioral referrals; (4) attendance; (5) grade point average; (6) self-concept; and (7) behavioral ratings from home. Students in the SGC treatment met for 12 sessions in which permissiveness, catharsis, trust, understanding, caring, acceptance, and confidence were emphasized. Students in the BG treatment were assigned specific readings and met in group sessions to discuss the readings. The placebo treatment excluded group methods and materials specifically identified as part of either SGC or BG, but included techniques traditionally employed in individual counseling. Findings indicated that only the variable, "feelings about treatment," was significantly different among groups: SGC and BG subjects were more satisfied than placebo treatment subjects about their treatments. (NRB)

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Structured Group Counseling and Bibliotherapy

As In-School Strategies for Preventing

Problems in Children from Changing Families

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CG 015330

This paper is a condensed version of an educational dissertation being completed in the Division of Counseling and School Psychology, College of Education, The Pennsylvania State University. The completed version should be available in the Fall of 1981.

Need for the Study

In 1974, there were 940,000 divorces in the United States, more than twice the total in 1960 (Leslie, 1976). Today more than three in ten marriages end in divorce. This rate of divorce has caused extreme concern throughout the country. Churches, social service agencies, schools, and individual citizens have registered dismay over this development.

A review of the rate of family break up through divorce over the past ninety years shows an irregular but consistent growth in the rate of divorce and a concurrent decline in the percentage of lifelong marriages. (Table 1 was taken from National Center for Health Statistics, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare).

Ross and Sawhill (1975) noted a prediction by Norton and Glick that 25% to 30% of the women now in their late twenties or early thirties will divorce. From another perspective, Ogg (1975) pointed out that over one million marriages now end in divorce each year.

Table 1

Marriage and Divorce

1890 - 1977

Year	Marriages	Rate*	Divorces	Rate*
1890	570,000	9.0	33,461	.5
1900	709,000	9.3	55,751	.7
1910	948,166	10.3	83,045	.9
1920	1,274,476	12.0	170,505	1.6
1930	1,126,856	9.2	195,961	1.6
1940	1,595,879	12.1	264,000	2.0
1950	1,667,231	11.1	385,144	2.6
1960	1,523,000	8.5	393,000	2.2
1970	2,158,802	10.6	708,000	3.5
1975	2,152,662	10.1	1,036,000	4.9
1976	2,154,807	10.0	1,083,000	5.0
1977	2,176,000	10.1	1,090,000	5.0

*Rate per 1,000 population

The rate of divorce varies by geographic region, rate, and socio-economic status; however, the fact remains that the family is less likely to stay intact than in was 10, 20, or 30 years ago (Leslie, 1976).

The stability of the family is also affected by death, incarceration, military service and other living arrangements between parents. The place of residence of children under eighteen living in single parent families is presented in Table 2 which was taken from Ross and Sawhill (1975).

Table 2
Place of Residence of Children
Under 18 Living In
Single Parent Families

Place of Residence	1960 # of children	%	1970 # of children	%	Change in %
Living with male	873,000	14	1,566,000	16	+79
Living with female	5,207,000	86	8,134,000	84	+56
TOTAL	6,080,000	100	9,700,000	100	+60

Table 3, also taken from Ross and Sawhill (1975) presents a breakdown of female headed single parent families for the same period of time as in Table 2 and provides insight into the varied threats to the stability of the intact family. A breakdown for male headed single parent families was not available and due to the increasing trend to permit child custody to males in divorce settlements it cannot be assumed that male sub-categories were similar to those of female headed single parent families.

Table 3

Children Under Age 18

In Female Headed Single Parent Families

Residence	1960 # of children	%	1970 # of children	%	Change in %
Widowed	1,870,000	36	2,161,000	26	+16
Divorced	1,088,000	21	2,334,000	29	+115
Separated	1,333,000	25	2,266,000	28	+70
Single	252,000	5	706,000	9	+180
Other *	664,000	13	667,000	8	+ .5
TOTAL	5,207,000	100	8,134,000	100	+56

* This category includes married persons whose spouses are employed and living away from home or in the armed forces, immigrants whose spouses remained in other areas or wives of immates in institutions.

As illustrated in Tables 2 and 3, the number of children under 18 living in single parent families is up substantially in all but one category. The fact that divorce and separation have displaced widowed as the categories with the highest number of children included in them is significant but does not diminish concern over the children in the widowed category. In 1970, nearly seven million children were living in families headed by females as a result of divorce, separation and death. Although the increase in male headed single parent families was much higher than the increase in the female headed families the total number of children was still substantially less. When the total for male and female headed families is considered together (with the caution about the lack of sub-categories for the male headed families kept in mind) the total was nearly eight and one half million children in 1970.

The effect of the phenomenon presented in Tables 1, 2 and 3 on agencies and institutions within the society has been significant. The functions once performed by the intact family have had to be spread about among the other social institutions, and they have responded with varying degrees of success.

The change in family structure precipitated by divorce, separation, death, and other parental absences appears to have given rise to significant psychological, social and economic problems for some individuals. Women find themselves with a decreased income, without a male "handyman", having to work, filling the roles of both parents, being lonely, and discovering social problems as new singles. Men are often displaced, forced to live alone, lonely, displaced from the children, also discovering social problems as new singles and faced with the financial difficulties of maintaining two households.

Much has been written about the effects changes in family structure may or may not have on the children of the family in professional and popular literature. Divorce is suspected as a contributor to the rapidly rising adolescent suicide rate by Dr. M. Kalogeraki of the New York State Department of Mental Hygiene (1978). Similar suspicions were offered by Seiden (1969) in a review of the literature on suicide among youth. In addition Fisher (1974) thinks that children's feelings of rejection are related to divorce and Wernick (1974) noted a general pain which the children experience.

More specific problems related to changes in family structure have also been suggested in the professional literature. Bronfenbrenner (1970) has found that boys from father-absent homes tend to be markedly more submissive and dependent than boys from homes in which the father is present. Bronfenbrenner's findings are supported by Biller and Bohn (1971) and Marino and McGowan (1976). The clinical findings of Stewart (1973) regarding the effects of traumatic separation of parents from families indicate somatic responses by the children of the family among other things. Similar and more extensive findings from clinical contact are reported by Wallerstein and Kelley (1976). The work of Wallerstein and Kelley has been reported in many professional and popular journals and appears to be the most cogent study to date.

The list of problem symptoms found in the literature is alarming. Children of divorce are viewed as more aggressive than average in the schools (Felner and Cowen, 1975); boys are subject to displaying compensatory masculinity while girls seem to be overly dependent on their mother (Lynn and Sawry, 1959): these children seem to have greater incidences of difficulty relating to peers (Eddy and Silverman, 1974; Lynn and Sawry, 1959; Mitchell and Wilson, 1967; Wallerstein and Kelley, 1976); and there apparently is a higher incidence of drug abuse (Lawrence and Velleman, 1974). Finally, Heatherington (1973) offers evidence of a high rate of clumsy sexual relationships with men among girls from father-absent homes.

Of specific interest to school counselors are the findings on the effect of changed family structure on children's in-school behavior. Lamberts, et.al. (1971) found high levels of overt and covert anti-teacher attitudes among children of divorce while Stewart (1973) found evidence of a lower self-image present in children who lived only with their father. Evidence that parental absnece may be a major contributing factor to low academic achievement was presented by Marino and McCowan (1976), and Wallerstein and Kelley (1976) Finally, parental absence is listed as a contributor to delinquency by Felner and Cowen (1975) Glueck and Glueck (1950, 1970); Marino and McCowan (1976); Moffett and Scherner (1976); and Stewart (1973).

Evidence to suggest that changed family structure is not such a problem situation for the children of the family is also found in the literature. Greenstein (1966) finds no relationship between father-absence and homosexuality. Agreement among laymen on the damages caused by divorce is not born out by research according to Goode (1956). Kelly, et.al. (1965) found divorce does affect school attendance but that no negative effect was apparent on adademic achievement or teacher-related school behavior. Birnbaum (1966) found no difference in grade point average, work habits, standardized reading scores, or co-curricular activities when comparing children from broken and unbroken homes as did Nye (1957) and Burchinal (1964). Reinhard (1971) found surveyed students reported no significant problems related to their coping with divorce.

Ross and Sawhill (1975) ask that overstatement of results of father-absence be discontinued in order to stop the feeling that "Much is known". In addition Westman (1972) asks that other factors such as age, sex, relationships with

departing and custodial parent, circumstances of the divorce, sibling relationships, and personal developmental history to be studied as to the degree of interaction they may have with divorce as a cause of children's problems. Timing and length of divorce as well as one's socio-cultural milieu and availability of surrogate models are cited as additional important related variables to study (Biller, 1970). The son's ordinal position, sex of siblings, and extent of extended family interaction are cited by Kopf (1970) as salient variables in the study of father-absent boys.

With the mixed message provided by the literature regarding the effects of changing family structure on the children of the family one writer's caution of closer study of related variables appears warranted. It is, however, safe to assume that there is enough evidence to hypothesize that changed family structure may very well be a source of problems for children and adolescents. This assumption has caused some writers to publish articles, books, and intervention programs in order to assist in alleviating the problem.

Works by Cull and Hardy (1969), Ogg (1975), Steinzor (1969), and a handbook by Women in Transition (1974) are directed at parents who have divorced. Many of these and other parent-directed works offer sections on how to help the children. Publications directed specifically to children are much less prevalent. Several of the most noted child-directed works are by Cain (1973), Gardner (1970), and Richards and Willis (1976). These authors attempt to communicate directly to children and adolescents as to how to cope with their new situation.

Brown (1971) emphasized the common feeling in the late 1960's that the best means of preventing deviant development in children and adolescents from changed family situations was accomplished by assisting parents. It appears to some today that the best vehicle for the treatment of these young people may still be the parent.

Intervention from outside the family has typically been focused on family counseling (the inclusion of children and custodial parent). Consequently, the children seem to have been an afterthought for the most part.

Over the last few years, however, adolescents have been gaining more independence in many ways causing an increase in social and medical services offered directly to adolescents. Legal decisions which permit anonymous treatment for veneral disease, drug abuse, and pregnancy tend to encourage an expansion of direct services to adolescents in other areas including coping with a changed family structure.

The services offered directly to the children and adolescents have been provided primarily by private practice psychologists and psychiatrists, mental health agencies, social workers, and the clergy. The public schools have not, generally, delivered direct programs to the children from changed families. Often the school efforts are indirect and involve indentification of children due to behavior problems, poor achievement or high absenteeism and result in counseling regarding the family situation after the problems have surfaced. Holdahl and Casperson (1977, p. 473) pointed out that "Traditionally community support services have been directed primarily to those children who are exhibiting gross maladjustment to life changes. These services are mainly corrective and rehabilitative in nature and are not designed to serve the greater numbers of children experiencing change." The school services have generally paralleled the community support described by Holdahl and Casperson.

Several schools are offering programs for these students. O'Reilly (1979) has presented a program functioning in Lexington, Massachusetts for children of divorce designed as a minimally structured discussion group for senior high school students facilitated by a counselor. The response to this program has been extremely positive and has been reported in a number of other publications such as Gardner (1979) and Owens (1979). A program for elementary school children in a large urban area of the midwest is presented by Holdahl and Casperson (1977). To their program students from families changed by divorce, separation, death, and other reasons are involved in highly structured group counseling. A program in Menchville High School, Newport News, Virginia is in place for kids coping with loss (Kaplan, 1979). This program is open-ended and somewhat structured. Wilkinson and Bleck (1977) offer a similar program for elementary school students.

A six-week program for children dealing with divorce in Evergreen, Colorado is presented by Magid (1977). This program includes a high degree of parental involvement along with structured group counseling for students. These few programs appear to constitute the total number of direct intervention program available in the literature. The reaction of practioners indicates a high demand for more information as such programs, however, development of in-school programs for children and adolescents dealing with changed family structure seems to be in its infancy.

Theus (1977) in discussing the effects of divorce on school children thinks that our society must try to provide for the security and identity of these children while Brandwein et.al. (1974) caution that present practices and policies are based on ignorance. In addition Despert (1953) feels that those children who obtain outside help after divorce have a better chance to do well than those who remain in unhappy, unbroken homes. An important question to answer in developing direct intervention practices and policies is where an intervention program can be best provided. The Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry (1970) has presented an extensive study of the practice of family therapy in which they ask for common terminology and uniform recording of data. They also describe a divergence between treating a client separately and within the family unit. These polarized treatment models represent an excellent base from which to build some systematic policies and practices.

The family as the treatment unit may be most appropriate for private practice professionals and community mental health professionals while the single-client approach (the child) may be most appropriate for school counselors. As such, school counselors would not treat students who have severe personal-social problems. In those cases, the traditional differentiation between counselor and psychologist based on problem severity could be maintained.

The importance of the school and school counselors in the implementation of programs for children and adolescents dealing with changed family structure is established in the literature. Crescimbeni (1964) asks that school programs be made more flexible in order to assist in the child's inevitable readjustment following a family tragedy, that individual classroom expectancies should be modified, and that extensive, comprehensive guidance programs should be established. Others feel that school counselors must do more with families in the future (Lifton et.al., 1979). The school may be especially important for supplying some of the motivation a child may not get at home according to McCord and McCord (1962). Parks (1977) thinks that, "Probably the agency that has the potential of being the most supportive of the single-parent family is the public school." Parks also notes that while in school, the children from single-parent families find classmates of a similar background as well as adults who understand but to date single-parents surveyed by Partners Without Partners indicated difficulties in school as a major problem. Finally, Kelley and Wallerstein (1977) state that sometimes a teacher is the only stable figure in the child's environment.

A major problem appears to be poor communication between home and school. Despert (1953) points out that too often parents wait for the school to make the first move and Robillard (1971) comments that for many counselors most of the children being counseled are from the single-parent family. Some, including Jones (1976) want the schools to provide these children with information and role models through more interpersonal training for staff, more counselors, and a smaller class size as a means of increasing their coping skills and communication between home and school.

A more disturbing problem is the lack of training and experience regarding the problems and needs of children from families changed by divorce, separation, death, and other parental absences for most school counselors. Eddy and Silverman (1974) state that school counselors could help, but they have not been sufficiently exposed to the problem of divorce and how to specifically deal with it. They continue that, "Current counseling texts and journals reflect a lack of basic coverage, let alone emphasis on the problem of divorce," while Lifton et.al. (1979) finds little evidence that school counselors know the magnitude of family change.

The professional literature reviewed above has been established that children from families changed in structure by divorce, separation, death, and other parental absences may be very vunerable to life's problems and that there is presently little in the way of planned prevention programs offered in the schools. It is also apparent from the literature that school counselors are in need of more helpful information regarding ways to assist this sub-population.

My field experiences over the past five years in a junior high school setting has let me to implement several programs for assisting students from changing families. The most effective of those programs according to students and parents, was a structured group counseling approach. A second program which was apparently helpful was a form of bibliotherapy offered to individual students. The extremely positive response to both of these approaches from students, parents, staff, administration, and other professional counselors, along with support for intervention with this population in the literature, has led to this investigation of the effectiveness of each approach.

The problem to be addressed herein is the determination of the comparative effects of a structured group counseling treatment, a bibliotherapy treatment, and a placebo treatment on students from changing families using feelings about

treatment, knowledge of problems of the changing family, behavior referrals, school attendance, grade point average, self-concept and a behavioral rating from home as dependent variables. A placebo treatment is included because of the apparent lack of intervention programs with students from changing families in the schools. The comparison of the two treatment variations with the placebo treatment could serve as impetus to school counselors who are currently providing only indirect counseling to this sub-population.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to determine whether Structured Group Counseling treatment or Bibliotherapy Group treatment is more effective than placebo treatment among seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students from changing families on: a) feelings about treatment; (b) knowledge of problems of the changing family; (c) behavioral referrals; (d) attendance; (e) grade point average; (f) self-concept; and (g) a behavioral rating from home.

METHODS

SUBJECTS

Population to be Studied

The population being studied consisted of boys and girls in grades seven, eight, and nine who were residing in a changing family at Park Forest Junior High School, State College, Pennsylvania. The school is one of two junior high schools with an enrollment of approximately 900 students in three grades. The school district is located in a community of 50,000 people in the central of the state. The community is uncharacteristic to its setting because of a cosmopolitan population due to the presence of the Pennsylvania State University. The school district is under-represented in terms of minorities and low income groups as a result of the population attracted to the university. No data was available regarding the percentage of the school population residing in changing families but it was felt that the percentage was comparable to the national average.

Sample

The population selected for the study was twenty-five girls and twenty-three boys from all three grades residing in changing families. The subjects were identified through a staff survey, an announcement in the school newspaper, an announcement in a parent newsletter, and an announcement on the school public address system.

All identified subjects were screened to insure they fit Gazda's (1968) definition..."normal individuals with various concerns which are not debilitating to the extent requiring extensive personality change" (p. 21).

Those subjects selected via the screening process were randomly assigned to each of the three treatment conditions from two lists diferentiated by sex only. Subjects in both SGC and BG were then randomly assigned to one of the three groups within each mode. Finally each group was randomly assigned to one of the three counselors.

Table 4 presents the composition of each treatment group. Under-representation of some grades resulted from the decision not to block by grade. The researcher felt that grade differences had not been significant in past pilot groups. The decision not to block by grade was supported by the fact that the number of prospective subjects were not evenly distributed across all three grades.

Table 4

Student Composition of Treatment Conditions

Treatment Condition	GIRLS			BOYS			TOTAL
	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	
SGC	3	1	4	2	4	1	15
EG	4	2	3	4	1	2	16
Placebo	2	3	3	4	3	2	17
TOTAL	9	6	10	10	8	5	48

Measures

Seven dependent variables were measured in this study. Each was selected because of its potential for contributing unique information about the effects of the treatments.

Survey of Fellings About Treatment

All subjects were asked to complete a five item survey as to the positiveness or negativeness of their feelings about each of the three treatment modes at the end of the treatment. The responses to the survey items were given numerical values from one through seven, with seven being the most positive response and one the least positive.

Test of Knowledge of Problems of the Changing Family

All subjects were asked to complete a twenty item true-false test on their knowledge of perceived problems of the changing family at the end of treatment. The test was based on twenty-eight planned content issues presented in the treatment groups by the counselors during the study. Using a criterion-reference procedure student responses which indicated their recognition of those content-related issues were considered correct.

Count of Behavioral Referrals to the Assistant Principal

Each subject's record of behavioral referrals was reviewed for a count of referrals for the 62 school days prior to the study and for the 64 school days of the study. The two totals were treated as pre-post measures for analysis.

Inspection of Subject's Attendance

A review of the school's standard attendance records was conducted for each subject. The number of absences for the 62 school days prior to the study and for the 64 school days of the study were tabulated. The two totals were treated as pre-cost measures for analysis.

Inspection of Subject's G.P.A.

Each subject's G.P.A. for the first and third nine weeks grading period were used as pre and post measures of school achievement. The G.P.A. was calculated on major subjects only. The majors include English, social studies, math and science.

Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale

All subjects were asked to complete an eighty item self-concept scale before and after the treatment (Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale). "This scale was designed primarily for research on the development of children's self-attitude and correlates of these attitudes" (Piers, 1969, p.2). Piers (1969) presents internal reliability coefficients from .78 to .93 from the Kruder-Richardson Formula 21, and coefficients of .90 and .87 from the Spearman-Brown odd-even formula.. Test-retest coefficients of .72, .71, and .72 were also reported for the original ninety-one item scale and coefficient of .77 on the current eighty item scale. Concurrent validity is reported by Piers (1969) from -.64 to .68 with the Piers-Harris total score for fifteen different measures from peer ratings to the Lipsitt Children's Self-Concept Scale.

Survey of Behavior at Home

The parent or guardian of each student was asked to complete a fifty-item survey about the subjects' behavior at home before and after the treatment. The questions were drawn from content identified by Miller (1967) in a clinical study designed to help researchers and clinicians systematically organize the child's symptoms. The responses were given a numerical value from one to three, with one indicating the most positive behavior and three the least positive. Scores on the survey could range from a most positive of fifty to a least positive of one hundred and fifty.

Counselors

The three counselors who facilitated the treatment groups were certified school counselors each of whom had conducted thirty or more groups prior to this study. Each counselor received three hours of training in SGC and BG. The training included readings, discussion and practice in the techiques to be employed by the investigator. The specifics of the counselor training program are presented in Appendix A.

Materials

Content Monitor Sheets

This form, found in Appendix B, was used in weekly meetings between the counselors and the investigator. The format of the form permitted review of specific content issues to determine whether or not each of the twenty-eight content issues established as basic content was dealt with.

Process Monitor Sheet

This form, found in Appendix B, was also used in the weekly meetings between counselors and the investigator. The format of this form permitted review of group development to determine if modifications or structured activities were necessary to enhance group functioning.

This format was also used to determine if specific subjects were in need of special counseling services.

Changing Family Handbook

This handbook, found in Appendix D, was the result of five years of counseling contact with students from changing families. It includes twenty-four content issues repeatedly brought out in group and individual counseling sessions (twenty-four content issues rather than twenty-eight were included in this handbook because the other four content issues - group process, adolescent psychology, job information and affirmative

action for increased self-concept - which are found in Appendix B, did not fit the format employed).

How to Get It Together When Your Parents Are Coming Apart

This book by Arlene Richards and Ivine Willis, represents one of the most functional books available for students dealing with a changing family. Bernstein (1977) in a book reviewing over four hundred works dealing with separation and loss felt that the Richards and Willis work," . . . is a valuable book that ranges far and wide in its attempts to help youngsters cope with divorce . . ." (p. 149).

Procedures

Assignment of Subjects

Students who were accepted as subjects for the study were informed of the specifics of the treatment program then asked if they wished to continue in the program. Students who elected to continue were then assigned to treatment groups as described in the section entitled Sample above. Students assigned to placebo treatment were involved in meetings after completion of the study in which necessary counseling was provided.

Parental Participation

The parent (s) or guardian (s) of each subject received a letter explaining the program along with a permission slip prior to treatment. The original letter was followed by a phone call to discuss the program Parents were also asked to complete and return the Survey of Behavior at home before and after the study and to attend pre and post treatment meetings held in the evening at the school.

Structural Group Counseling (SGC) Treatment

This treatment consisted of twelve, forty-five minute group counseling sessions between December, 1979 and March, 1980 (The specifics of this treatment mode are presented in Appendix B). Within this treatment there were

three subgroups: one contained four subjects (one girl and three boys); another contained five subjects (three girls and two boys); and a third contained six subjects (four girls and two boys). Each group session took place in the counseling suite of Park Forest Junior High School. The counselors conducted each of the twelve sessions with an emphasis on permissiveness, catharsis, trust, understanding, caring, acceptance, and confidence.

At the first meeting subjects were asked to complete the Piers-Harris scale after initial introductions. For the remainder of the session and for the next ten sessions, students introduced or were introduced to twenty-eight specific content issues which are presented in Appendix B. Throughout those sessions the counselor monitored the content discussed. The final session was used for the completion of the Piers Harris scale, the survey of feelings about treatment and a test of knowledge of problems of the changing family; and for members' reactions to the group. In this session the counselor asked each subject to share feelings and thoughts about the group in general and its impact upon them. The counselor also encouraged subjects to maintain current relationships with others in this group.

The process of the group was modeled after the outline by Mahler (1969). The stages in Mahler's design are as follows:

Involvement - An easy, slow start for the first through third sessions. In this stage the group should explore goals and expectations. The leader should guard against any early disclosures which might threaten the group members.

Transition - This stage occurs between the second and fourth session. It is often signaled by a concern over how confidentiality will be established. More personalized interaction is appropriate at this time.

Working - From the fourth to fifth session until the next to the last session, the group should be marked by a distinct emphasis on the here and now. Most content issues should appear during this stage.

Ending - The last session should serve as a means of closure. Activities which draw out reactive statements about the groups by the members are sought.

The counselor monitored the groups process throughout all of the twelve sessions. At times during the study it was necessary to offer structured activities in the group sessions to enhance process. Those activities were selected at weekly meetings with the investigator from a listing.

Bibliotherapy Group (BG) Treatment

This treatment followed the definition provided by Bernstein (1977), "Bibliotherapy is seen as the self-examination and insight that are gained from reading no matter what the source" (p. 21). In this study the BG was explicit rather than implicit in that specific readings were assigned to the subjects.

Group sessions were held to review and discuss readings and to receive instructions for further reading. The group format for bibliotherapy was employed to permit systematic management of review and discussion (the particulars of this treatment mode are presented in Appendix C).

BG consisted of three subgroups, one contained six subjects (three girls and three boys). Another contained five subjects (three girls and two boys), and a third contained five subjects (three girls and two boys). Each group met for five, forty-five minute sessions between December, 1979 and March, 1980. Each session was held in the counseling suite of the Park Forest Junior High School. The counselor conducted each of the five sessions with the same emphasis as was present in the SGC.

At the first meeting students were asked to complete the Piers-Harris scale after initial introductions. The counselor then passed out to each subject a packet entitled, "The Changing Family Handbook" and a copy of a book by Richards and Willis titled How to Get It Together When Your Parents Are Coming Apart and made a specific reading assignment.

In the next two sessions subjects discussed their readings. During these and the final two sessions, the counselors employed the same techiques of group leadership used with SGC.

The fourth session had the subjects view and discuss a video tape drama which presented some of the trama related to a young girl's attempt to modify the behavior of her divorced parents. The video tape entitled "Family Matters" was acquired from the series entitled "Self-Incorporated" which was produced by the Agency for Instructional Television, Box A, Bloomington, Indiana 47401.

In the final session subjects were asked to complete the Piers-Harris scale, the survey of feelings about treatment and a test on knowledge of problems of the changing family. The counselor then conducted the same closing exercises as employed in SGC.

Placebo Treatment

Subjects assigned to this treatment included eight girls and nine boys who were provided with traditional counseling at Park Forest Junior High School which normally includes identification through referral and subsequent counseling on an as-needed basis.

These subjects were asked to meet before the treatments began to complete the Piers-Harris scale. All placebo subjects were informed at that meeting that all identified students could not be dealt with at the same time and that they would be involved later in the year.

After treatment was completed the subjects met to complete the Piers-Harris scale, the survey of feelings about treatment and a test of knowledge of problems of the changing family. In this meeting subjects were offered counseling services and presented with BG reading materials.

This treatment excluded group methods and materials specifically identified as part of either SGC or BG but did include techniques traditionally employed in individual counseling.

Each of the placebo treatment subjects was seen by a counselor during the course of the treatments although twelve of the seventeen were self-referrals, which was an unusually high ratio when compared to past years at Park Forest Junior High.

Treatment Check

A content monitor sheet and a process monitor sheet described above were used to establish evidence of parallel treatment across the treatment subgroups. The sheets were reviewed each week at a one hour meeting between the investigator and the counselors.

The process monitor sheet was also used to help identify students who might be in need of special counseling services.

Design and Analysis

The investigator employed a posttest only design with a one-factor ANOVA and subsequent Tukey test if needed for the two variables listed in Hypotheses and one and two. The variables listed in Hypotheses three through seven were treated in a pretest-posttest design with an ANOVR (Games, 1975) and a subsequent Tukey test if needed.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Problem One

Does the participation of subjects residing in changing families from grades seven, eight, and nine in SCG or BG produce higher scores on a post-test measure of feelings about treatment than scores attained by subjects in placebo treatment?

Discussion of the Findings for Problem One

The purpose of Problem One was to determine the effect of SGC, BG, and placebo treatment on subjects' feelings about treatment. Analysis of the data yielded a significant F-ratio which established the rejection of the null hypothesis at the .05 level. Further analysis indicated that subjects in both SGC and BG felt better about treatment than did subjects in placebo treatment.

The findings for Problem One may have resulted from the systematic meetings with SGC and BG but not with the placebo treatment; however, this does not explain why SGC would not score better than BG as a result of over two times as many meetings. Perhaps systematic counselor contact did cause an increase in feelings about treatment but the quantity of contact was not significant.

A second explanation for the findings for Problem One is that both treatments did result in more positive subject feelings about treatment but neither inspired a significantly higher score because the treatments were quite similar in content. The method of content delivery may have had no impact upon subject's feelings about treatment.

A third explanation for the findings for Problem One may be tied to the high percentage of students who opted for involvement in the study. Eighty percent of the students asked chose to participate. The high positive response may have been the result of the reputation of the counseling program at Park Forest Junior High School. In past years the counselors have conducted extensive group counseling for concerns from weight loss to interpersonal relations.

Generally students have been quite willing to become involved in those group counseling programs. Possibly the high expectancy of students at involvement was transferred to their feelings about treatment.

The inclusion of feelings about treatment as a treatment variable appears to have been warranted as the response to invitation and treatment represents a measure of felt need for such treatment programs.

Although testimonials were not part of the evaluative design of this study several are included in Appendix T. The testimonials provided on insight into feelings about treatment of significant others to the study.

Problem Two

Does the participation of subjects residing in changing families from grades seve, eight, and nine in SGC and BG produce higher scores on a post-test measure of knowledge of problems of the changing family than scores attained by subjects in placebo treatment?

Discussion of the Findings for Problem Two

The purpose of Problem Two was to determine the effect of SGC, BG and placebo treatment subjects knowledge of problems of the changing family. Analysis of data resulted in the retention of the null hypothesis.

Apparently none of the treatment modes had significant impact upon subject's scores. This finding may have been the result of an insensitive measure. The test contained twenty true false items which appear to have permitted too much random chance on each item. Perhaps items constructed for complete recall may have been more discriminatory.

A second explanation for the findings for Problem Two was that neither SGC or BG was able to cover all of the twenty eight content issues three times as was the desired goal. That shortcoming may have inhibited the results of the treatment.

Although the results were not significant knowledge of problems of the changing family constituted a major focus of the treatment modes and was a necessary treatment variable.

Problem Three

Does the participation of subjects reading in changing families from grades seven, eight, and nine in SGC or BG produce greater decreases from pre to post measures of behavioral referrals than those attained by subjects in placebo treatment?

Table 5

Samples Sizes and Number of Behaviorals For Each Treatment

Treatment Condition	Number of Referrals Pre.	Post	Total	Number In Treatment
SGC	1	3	4	15
BG	4	3	7	16
Placebo	2	0	2	17

Discussion of the Findings for Problem Three

The purpose of Problem Three was to determine the effect of SGC, BG, and placebo treatment on behavioral referrals. Table 5 illustrates that none of the treatment modes had enough referrals to warrant statistical analysis.

The lack of data may have been the result of the initial screening process designed to exclude students in need of special counseling services. In the setting of the study behavioral referrals may have been an indication of more serious problems than in other settings. Perhaps a teacher rating scale may have been more discriminating for this problem.

The results for Problem Three offer evidence to refute studies which suggest that students from changing families have substantially more severe behavior

problems in school than students from intact families.

The selection of behavioral referrals as a treatment variable for this study may have been in error. The lack of usable data appears to have been an indication that a measure of less serious behavioral occurrances may have been more functional for this study.

Problem Four

Does the participation of subjects residing in changing families from grades seven, eight, and nine in SGC or BG produce greater gains from pre to post measures of school attendance than those attained by subjects in the placebo treatment?

Discussion of the Findings for Problem Four

The purpose of Problem Four was to determine the effect of SGC, BG, and placebo treatment on school attendance. Apparently the treatment modes had no significantly different impact on school attendance.

The findings for Problem Four may have resulted from factors other than the presented treatments. Pre attendance data was collected for the months of September, October, November, and part of December while post data came from part of December, January, February and part of March. The post treatment months appear to have had a greater absenteeism rate across all populations within the school. A random sample of forty-eight students who did not reside in changing families resulted in a pre to post change from 4.1 to 7.3 which was quite in line with the scores for each of the treatment groups. The similarity of data on attendance for changing family and non-changing family populations may indicate that in the setting of this study students residing in changing families do not have greater problems with school attendance. As in Problem Three the findings here may refute studies which suggest from changing families have significantly greater attendance problems than students from intact families.

An opposite explanation for the findings for Problem Four is also possible. Counselor attention to subjects in all treatment modes may have accounted for an attendance pattern essentially the same as that of the overall school population. This explanation assumes that changing family subjects' attendance rates would have been more negative than those of the non-changing family students had no intervention been employed and that all treatments including placebo had equal impact.

It is certain that all three treatments were equal in effectiveness regardless of explanation for Problem Four. In the first explanation all treatments would appear equal and ineffective while in the second each treatment would appear equal and effective.

The inclusion of attendance as a treatment variable for this study seems to have been in order. The significance placed on attendance data regarding this population in the literature warrants its inclusion.

Problem Five

Does the participation of subjects residing in changing families from grades seven, eight, and nine in SGC and BG produce higher gains scores from pre to post measures of GPA than those attained by subjects in placebo treatment?

Discussion of the Findings of Problem Five

The purpose of Problem Five was to determine the effect of SGC, BG and placebo treatment on GPA. Data analysis indicated that none of the treatments appeared to have had significantly different impact on GPA.

The findings for Problem Five present the same dual explanation as found for Problem Four. The treatments were apparently equal in effect upon subjects GPA however, the significance of that finding was not clear.

An investigation of a random sample of forty-eight students who were not residing in changing families established a pre GPA of 2.68 and a post GPA of 2.64 which was in line with the results of all treatment modes. If the changing family population was not subject to more school achievement problems then the non changing family population then the findings are not significant. If however, the changing family population was likely to have more achievement

problems then all three treatments had significant impact.

The equality of results for the three treatment conditions may have been the result of counselor attention if the latter explanation is accepted. The selection of GPA as a treatment variable appears to have been in order. GPA represents the major criteria for evaluation of school success and as such must be included in a study of an in school program such as the present one.

Problem Six

Does participation of subjects residing in changing families from grades seven, eight, and nine in SGC and BG produce higher gains scores from pre to post measures of self-concept in the Piers-Harris scale from those attained by subjects in placebo treatment?

Discussion of the Findings for Problem Six

Does participation of subjects residing in changing families from grades seven, eight and nine in SGC and BG produce higher gains scores from pre to post measures of self-concept in the Piers-Harris scale from those attained by subjects in placebo treatment?

Discussion of the Findings for Problem Six

The purpose of Problem Six was to determine the effect of SGC, BG and placebo treatment on self-concept. Data analysis indicated that none of the treatments had an impact upon the subjects scores on the Piers-Harris children's self concept scale.

The findings for Problem Six may have been the result of a study design which included only twelve sessions in SGC and only five session in BG. It may have been unrealistic to expect significant change in self-concept scores in a period of only three months in light of the limited amount of contact between counselor and subject.

The inclusion of self-concept as a treatment variable appears to have been warranted regardless of the findings for this problem. Self-concept represents a critical component of a student's facility for coping with the environment and was a necessary aspect of this study.

Problem Seven

Does the participation of subjects residing in changing families from grades seven, eight and nine in SGC or BG produce a higher gains scores on pre to post measures on a behavioral rating from home than those attained by subjects in placebo treatment?

Discussion of the Findings for Problem Seven

The purpose of Problem Seven was to determine the effects of SGC, BG and placebo treatment on a behavioral rating from home. The data analysis indicated that none of the treatments had significantly different impact on behavioral ratings from home

The findings for Problem Seven may have resulted from the construction of the survey. Respondents were permitted three choices for each item and in nearly every case the middle choice was selected most often. This response tendency may have held all scores fairly stable from pre to post measures. Perhaps the scale would have been more discriminatory had it included five rather than three choices.

The inclusion of a behavioral rating from home as a treatment variable appears to have been appropriate for this study because the parent or guardian reaction may have had significant potential for reinforcement of perceived behavioral change.

Content Monitor Sheet

The content monitor sheets were employed to record the progression of content within each treatment session. At weekly meetings the data from the sheets was studied to plan future treatment sessions. Through these meetings it was discovered that neither SGC nor BG were able to introduce each of the twenty-eight content issues three times as was designed in the study. The number of content issues was too large for the number of sessions provided in the study. Even the reduction in the number of times an issue would be introduced from three to two was not enough of an adjustment to permit the introduction of each item. The counselors were instructed to cover the remaining unintroduced items once during the next to last session.

It appears that the inability to cover the content as planned may have had a negative impact on all the problems of the study, especially Problem Two.

Process Monitor Sheet

The process monitor sheets were employed to record the process developments of each treatment group and to note situations which might indicate subjects in need of special counseling services.

Through the use of these sheets at weekly meetings five subjects were identified (three in SGC and two in BG) who had personal and family concerns which might have excluded each of them from this study had their concerns become known at the time of initial screening. None of the subjects' concerns were found out until after the seventh week of the study. It was apparent that the group process was the impetus for the disclosure of these concerns and that such disclosures were not likely to occur without some significant, sustained counselor contact. Due to the time of the discovery of the subjects' concerns it was decided to permit the five subjects to complete their participation in the study and then be provided follow-up individual counseling. The early identification and exclusion of these subjects may have enhanced the results of this study.

A second finding from the process monitor sheets was that five subjects withdrew from the study before its completion. Two subjects moved from the school district after initial screening but before the first group meeting and three others withdrew during the first week of the study for personal and parental concerns.

Several concerns were raised by counselors on process monitor sheets which may have had some impact on the findings of this study. The first concern was that group members selected randomly left the counselor without one of the most valued tools of a group facilitator --- freedom to structure group membership. The counselor felt that their inability to select members to form their groups had a negative effect on its general development when compared to groups they had facilitated in the past. The counselors emphasized that careful selection of group members may have enhanced the efficacy of their groups.

The second concern was that the inclusion of subjects from all forms of changing families may have been inhibiting. The counselor felt that at times the content was more in tune with divorce than death and other changing family types. This concern was the result of what the counselor felt was limited interest in some of the twenty-eight content issues by subjects who were residing in families changed by death. If this counselor concern was real it may have had a negative effect on the findings for all of the problems of this study especially Problem Two.

The third concern was the lack of positive models of group processes in the study. In preceeding years students from groups the year before were placed in newly formed groups to provide an element of modeling. In this study it was felt that such a measure was too difficult to control and because it could not be duplicated in settings where no groups were conducted before. The counselors felt that the lack of such models inhibited the development of their groups when compared to previous years groups.

DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY

This study did not generate substantial statistical evidence to support the hypothesized expectancies for the treatments employed. However, several of the concerns generated through the Content and Process Monitor Sheets appear to have had serious impact on the treatments offered. The design decisions to exclude models and to decrease the number of sessions were perhaps the most negative as they apparently resulted in a diffused and consequently weaker treatment. In future studies, care should be taken to insure that enough time is available to consider all content issues according to the process plans decided upon. In this study the casual, open process structure did not provide for the consideration of the twenty-eight content issues due to too few sessions especially with the exclusion of process models.

Randomly placing subjects seems to have resulted in groups which were less desirable than groups which would have resulted from the usual counselor practice of interview and evaluation prior to inclusions in a group. Typically, a counselor would make some subjective judgements regarding a student's compatability with and contribution to the group before including the student. In this study subjects were assigned randomly to groups but in retrospect groups should have been organized in the traditional fashion and then assigned randomly to treatments. In this way each group would have represented what the counselors felt were potentially effective groups.

Research with children and adolescents from changing families in the schools is made difficult by the fact that although there are typically plenty of potential subjects, the number which can be included is dimished by inflexible schedules, high demands on counselor time, limited number of service provides (counselor) and most of all, the fact that the state of the art is essentially undefined at this point.

The present study was a modest first attempt to objectively evaluate the effectiveness of two types of in-school programs for children of changing families. To the time of the study, no research studies regarding group interventions with this sub-population were discovered in the literature. Although modest in its findings, it is the investigator's hope that it will be only the first of

many studies contributing to a body of research findings which will lead to a number of functional group programs to be employed with children and adolescents from the changing family.

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APPENDIX A

Counselor Training Packet

This packet is designed to help increase the competency of counselors working with children from changing families at Park Forest Junior High School, State College, Pennsylvania, for the 1979-80 school year. During this academic year we will use two group approaches for working with students from changing families: Structured Group Counseling (SGC) and Bibliotheraphy Group (BG).

Prior to a three-hour training session, the counselors will have reviewed the materials on group counseling and on the changing family suggested in the SGC Handbook (page 1 and 2). The counselors will also review the SCFC Handbook, and lpages 20-37 of Books to Help Children Cope with Separation and Loss by Joanne E. Bernstein. The training will be based on these works and concepts and practices generated from five years of experience in conducting groups with children of the changing family.

Training Session Goal and Objectives

Goal To prepare four school counselors to conduct SGC and BG with students and evaluate their efforts.

Objectives To introduce the objectives of the counseling effort.

To introduce specific readings on group counseling, the changing family and bibliotherapy.

To discuss SGC and BG as it applies to the junior high school population of children from changing families.

To practice specific group counseling and bibliotherapy techniques.

To present and discuss the time parameters for this counseling intervention.

To present, discuss, and practice use of the "content" and "process" monitor sheets.

To present and discuss instruments which will be taken by the population being studied.

To discuss and develop a means for determining the efficacy of these intervention techniques in light of the overall counselor role in the school.

Training Session

I. Introduction of Program

A. Introductory comments.

B. Review of goals and objectives.

II. Discussion of Group Counseling

A. General discussion of readings.

B. Discussion of counselors' experience in group counseling.

C. Trainer's presentation of dynamics of changing family groups.

III. Discussion of Changing Family

A. General discussion of readings.

B. Discussion of counselors' experience in counseling (group or individual) children of the changing family.

C. Trainer's presentation of experiences with children of the changing family.

IV. SGC Intervention

A. Review SGC Handbook

B. Discussion of major issues of concern as raised by counselors.

C. Discussion of "content" and "process" monitor sheet implementation.

In this study, the "process" monitor sheet will be employed as presented in the SGC Handbook. The "content" monitor sheet will be marked with an "X" to indicate a student introduction of an issue or a " " to indicate the counselor introduction. Each of these marks will be followed by a number "1" if the issue was discussed for less than 10 minutes and a "2" if it was discussed for more than 10 minutes.

D. Practice SGC group facilitation

The trainer will assign each counselor and himself a "family background" and "reaction role" to carry out in a role play situation. The trainer will function as the facilitator first and then pass that role to each counselor. The content of these role plays will be selected from among the 28 issues tested in the SGC Handbook. This process will be repeated several times to insure each counselor has been sensitized to the mood and dynamics of the changing family group.

V. Bibliotherapy Intervention

A. Review of Bibliotherapy Handbook.

B. Discussion of major issues of concern as raised by the counselors.

C. Discussion of "content" and "process" monitor sheet implementation.

D. Practice bibliotherapy group facilitation.

E. Review video tape, Family Matters.

VI. Structured Experiences for Groups

A. Presentation of listing of structured experiences.

B. Discussion of the use of these activities.

Counselors will be asked to make use of these activities only after

prior discussion of their plans at weekly meetings during the study. These activities can be very helpful but only if there is an abvious need for them.

VII. Time Line for the Study

A. SGC groups will meet for one 45-minute session each week for 14 weeks from October through February of the 1979-80 school year. The first and last session will be used for measurement and the last session will include an outside-school luncheon.

B. Bibliotherapy groups will meet for one 45-minute session each week twice in October and twice in February. The first and last session will be used as with the SGC groups. In December, students will be invited to review a video tape Family Matters with the counselor.

C. Counselor-trainer meetings will be held each week of the study commencing one week before the first group sessions in October and continuing until one week after the last group sessions in February. These meetings will be used to insure parallel treatment among groups and to discuss problems.

D. Follow-up treatment of students in the "no treatment" and if necessary the SGC or BG will be carried out from February through May of the school year.

E. A post-study parent meeting will be held and the counselors will be invited to attend.

F. A follow-up meeting of counselors, investigator, principal, pupil personnel service director, students, parents, and teachers will be held at the end of the study.

VIII. Logistical Arrangements

Each counselor will select or be assigned a time and place to meet with the groups and a time and place for the monitoring meetings will be set up. (Students will be assigned to counseling groups later in the study).

APPENDIX B

(This handbook was modified as described
in the paper for use in the study)

STRUCTURED GROUP COUNSELING HANDBOOK

By

John T. Sheridan
Counselor

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This Handbook was prepared for use by the school counselor in dealing with students living in a changing family. The focus of this presentation is group intervention, but much of its content may be employed in individual counseling contacts.

In preparation for group intervention with children of changing families, the following readings are recommended:

Groups -

Clarence A. Mahler, Group Counseling in the Schools (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1969).

A. Allen Dye, Fundamental Group Procedures for School Counselors (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1968).

G.M. Gazda, ed., Basic Approaches to Group Psychotherapy and Group Counseling (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1968).

Merle M. Ohlsen, Group Counseling (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1970).

All of these readings and more are necessary if one is to function as a competent group facilitator. An individual must determine what level of experience and education he/she is dealing with and what else is needed.

Changing Family -

John Sheridan, Changing Family Handbook.

Richard A. Gardner, The Boys and Girls Book About Divorce (New York: Bantam Books, 1970).

Arlene Richards and Irene Williams, How to Get it Together When Your Parents are Coming Apart (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1976).

Mildred Masters, "Breakfast with Dad," Network (May 1978).

Ann Parks, "Children and Youth of Divorce in Parents Without Partners, Inc.," Journal of Clinical and Child Psychology (Summer 1977): 44-48.

There are hundreds of other sources, all of which are valuable and should be inspected, but those listed will allow a counselor to begin structured intervention with children in the school who live in a changing family.

After review of the suggested readings, and hopefully others, a school counselor would be conceptually prepared to begin the consideration of intervention with children of the changing family. After conceptual preparation for intervention with students from changing families, the school counselor must make a concerted effort to gain experiences which will permit the evaluation of concepts generated from the readings. Some suggested techniques for gaining such experiences are: involve oneself in role playing practice sessions with other professionals; present your concerns and plans to an adult group such as Parents Without Partners; observe other school counselors who may be involved in this service delivery; function as a co-facilitator with a counselor who is running such a group; ask student volunteers to discuss your concerns and perhaps join in the planning of your intervention program. These pre-program steps are important to help insure that you are prepared to offer a service to students who will value and benefit from it.

The term "changing family" is employed in this presentation because it best represents the process through which the family institution progresses when breakdown, divorce, separation, remarriage, and restructuring of roles occurs. This process may continue for two, four, or more years. It is important that a counselor does not overlook students due to length of time

from the event of divorce or remarriage. Often students' needs for developmental support do not terminate because of a single change in environment. The child, like the family, undergoes continual change, and the counselor must attempt to determine if a student is in need of "changing family" support regardless of the apparent status of the family.

How to Get a Group Program Started in Your School

With the conceptual and experiential preparation concluded (for a time), you are now ready to put an intervention program in place. Keep in mind Gazda's (1968) definition of group counseling as a general guide to your efforts.

> Group counseling is a dynamic process focusing on conscious thought and behavior and involving the therapy functions of permissiveness, orientation to reality, catharsis, and mutual trust, caring, understanding, acceptance and support. The therapy functions are created and nurtured in a small group through the sharing of personal concerns with one's peers and the counselor(s). The group counselees are basically normal individuals with various concerns which are not debilitating to the extent requiring extensive personality change. The group counselees may utilize the group interaction to increase understanding and acceptance of values and goals and to learn and/or unlearn certain attitudes and behaviors (p. 17).

The first phase of implementation is the identification of students in need. (Remember you seek to offer developmental support to "normal individuals with various concerns which are not debilitating.") Some, or all, of the following measures may be taken to identify your target population.

1. Survey school administrators and special service personnel.
2. Survey homeroom and class teachers.
3. Survey coaches and club sponsors.
4. Ask for volunteers through the school newspaper and/or the public

address system.

5. Inform parents of your plans and ask them for support through a flyer or the local newspaper.
6. Ask individual clients with a "changing family concern" to "spread the word."

The names generated from this process should be compiled for use in the second phase of implementation.

Care should be taken to review the list of names generated in Phase One to be certain that each of the entries is a potential group candidate. (Students with extreme needs or who are out of the "normal" range should not be approached to join your group effort but dealt with through an alternate technique.) In Phase Two, each of the persons on the list of potential targets are interviewed in what might be called a "recruitment session."

Before these students are asked to come to this session, the counselor should review some of the personal dynamics of the child of a changing family. Some children will be open and ready to involve themselves totally, while some will be sure they don't need to be involved. Others will be guarded and cautious about their situations and feelings. Because of this latter group, the counselor must approach each "recruitment session" with utmost care. The student must be at ease about his or her presence in the counseling office. The student should know the exact circumstances of the "recruitment session." A suggested sequence of counselor statements and questions follows.

"Hi Bob. I'm Mr. Sheridan. I would like to explain why I asked you to come in today. In the past few years, I have noticed that we have many

students whose parents are separated or divorced, and recently I have become more aware of some concerns such students may have. I am now trying to organize some programs which may help these students who feel they would like to get involved. I ask teachers, coaches, the principal, and others to tell me of any student they know of whose parents are separated, divorced, or remarried so I can ask them if they would like to be involved in some discussion groups. I received your name from that list.

"I don't want to pry or push you on this, but I hope you will listen to a couple of ideas I have on this discussion group plan and tell me what you think.

"Do you have any questions so far?"

At this point, the counselor will need to spell out the planned program as it is set up in her/his school. After some discussion, the counselor should ask the student if he/she can make a commitment to "try" the group for two or three meetings and to determine the best time(s) for the student to be involved. (It has been this counselor's experience to find at least 8 of 10 students asked to opt for involvement.)

The third phase of program development is to involve parents in the process. This may be accomplished through telephone conversations, formal or informal letters, or personal meetings with the parent(s) of the students you have found to partake of your program. The school counselor is reminded that her/his charge is to deal with school students primarily. Parent support is valuable but involvement needn't be extensive. Other community agencies should be available to the parent. (Systematic family counseling may be appropriate in some cases in which the counselor would most likely refer the client(s) to other professionals.)

At this time, a session with the administration and staff of the school might be in order if you haven't already done so. In this session, the professionals would be appraised of your planned program and its potential outcomes.

Specific Group Planning

The ten steps presented below are offered as pre-group structuring to insure that your groups will function effectively.

1. Set lower size limits of five and upper limits of ten for the group membership.
2. Insure that a group is either all one sex or nearly half male and half female. This is important because a good deal of the group content will focus on sex-role concerns. Having members of both sexes is desirable to provide for full airing of the issues involved. However, having only one or two members of one sex and eight or nine of the other may cause the minority members to misrepresent their sex when issues are discussed (five views are better than two). If 50/50 or 60/40 is not possible, care should be taken to make the group membership of one sex only with the leader taking a more active role in presenting "known" attitudes and opinions as members of the absent sex would. An exception to this rule might be made if the leader has had significant contact with the one or two members of the other sex and feels that they have a level of maturity which indicates their sex-related biases are quite typical, healthy, and representative.
3. Attempt to include one or more students in the group who have had previous group counseling experience, be it the same or different content. This will allow the leader to permit the group more self-directed freedom. This is important because the leader will be introducing content structure at times during the group process, but after structure intervention the leader will wish to focus primarily on process.

4. Attempt to include one or more models of successful coping behaviors related to the content area. This may be accomplished in several ways:

   -ask a student who has been an individual client and has exhibited positive coping,
   -seek out such a model through other PPS administration and instructional staff,
   -select students from previous groups (in subsequent years),
   -ask students interviewed to join the group if they are "students who seem to be doing well." It appears that there is a "pipeline" among this population which is functioning prior to any intervention. They know and talk to each other.

   The model(s) should be advised that modeling is a primary reason for their inclusion in the group.

5. The group may be cross-graded, or all members may come from the same grade. Cross-grading provides for some chance at understanding feelings of members who may be the same or nearly the same age as other members' siblings. This can aid members in dealing with their own siblings at home. This organization does not seem to detract substantially from sex-role discussions even when age differences are three+ years. The one-grade organization may maximize the sex-role exploration but may also reinforce "anti-sibling talk" and inhibit sibling relations at home.

6. Cultural differences must be attended to. The rule is to be sure no member is so different culturally (socio-economically) as to cause distraction in terms of content focus. More than one group should be established if one discovers two or more distinct subcultures represented in the identified population. This is important because the focus of the group may move from family structure to social systems, economics, etc. (e.g., "If my dad had a better job...," "My mom works and...," "Your old man runs around with all that cash...").

7. Plan to meet one period (approximately one hour) per week for a minimum of ten weeks, and include plans for at least one out-of-school activity (e.g., picnic, camp, movie) to be carried out somewhere between the tenth and final meeting. It appears from previous follow-up that the members tie their memories of the group to specific "social" activities. Providing this experience often leaves students with a "sweet taste" of a generally good experience discussing the content area. Students should be involved in the planning of this trip.
8. Contracting has been established as a significant means of insuring a minimal amount of leader intervention for the purpose of control in groups. This population seems to be an exception to that rule. Therefore, a written contract is not employed. A major reason for this factor seems to be that the students appear to view the problem (divorce, etc.) as primarily their parents' problem. They seem to feel free to discuss it because it's "not theirs."
9. Make necessary and appropriate arrangements for a comfortable meeting place. Providing for relaxed physical positioning is important. (Permit the members to sit as they would in a typical social situation.) Insure privacy!
10. Do not exclude students due to duration from time of change to present. Students two, four, or even ten years from the actual divorce are in need when they are members of a one-parent family or at times in reconstituted families when they show the need. (A 14-year-old girl whose parents were divorced when she was two felt she needed to know about fathers since she didn't know how to deal with them.)

Attending to Process and Content in the Groups

The content (what is talked about in the groups) should reflect the major concerns of the students. These concerns are presented, generally, in the suggested readings. The following content concerns, collected from the literature and from five years of experience in this area, should be dealt with by the end of the group program. The group facilitator should permit the members to introduce each concern but should be ready to introduce concerns when and if necessary. Often a member will bring out a specific concern in an unclear fashion. At those times, the facilitator should intervene in content with a more systematic approach and then return to process intervention only. These items are not presented in any hierarchy because their appropriateness is dependent upon the readiness of the group members.

1. Phases of personal reaction to loss of a significant other -- are offered by Hozman and Foilard (1977). These reactions are denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. Each of these stages is marked by specific identifiable behaviors and the meaning of the stage and its associated behavior should be presented.

Stage	Meaning	Behavior
denial	refuse to think about or believe it	act like all is the same; keep the truth from friends; lie about it; pretend all is the same
anger	becoming very upset over the facts, feeling that I have been mistreated	slamming doors for little reason; hitting people; yelling; being rude to parent, brother, sister; sassing teachers
bargaining	trying to get things back as they were	being bad so dad must come to help mom with me; missing a ride with Bill so dad must take me to mom's house; promising God I'll never do a bad thing if He gets them together
depression	feeling like all is lost, like I can't laugh	sitting around my room; not going out with friends; crying often; not eating
acceptance	feeling like it's done and I can go on	laughing when I feel like it; getting along with friends and family as before; fewer fights

In this content intervention, students should be asked to investigate themselves on the five stages and discuss their placement.

2. Social problems related to being in a changed family -- feelings of guilt, rejection, loneliness, oddness, etc., related to being different from kids whose families are not changed. Discussion of specific

concerns often presents this content area (e.g., "I feel bad because my dad never picks us up after dances or games...," "I hate it when I am out and my friends and I see my dad with some younger girl...")

3. Physical aggression -- What can you do when your parents (mom and boyfriend) fight? What if your mom, dad, or their friends abuse you? How can you deal with your brother or sister when they abuse you? Discussion in this area should include reference to all community agencies which can be called upon.

   Students should be permitted to share their own techniques. Plans for escape to neighbor, relative, friend, etc., may be necessary and can be dealt with, including training. This content area most often will include alcohol and drug abuse by the aggressor; consequently, community information on this issue is appropriate.

   This content area is critical in legal terms. The leader will need to inform the members of her/his obligations related to suspected abuse, but the leader must be sure to permit the member some control over her/his action. If the student under assault can be identified before the group process, the leader may consider individual as opposed to group counseling.

4. Santa Claus parent -- the visiting parent who showers the child with gifts for affection. Here the leader needs to ask the members to determine if such a situation exists for them and if so, how have they been responding. Alternatives to their current behavior should be explored. Some ways of responding include

   --accepting and continuing the behavior,
   --commenting on the type of "gift" desired,
   --structuring visits so gifts are less feasible,

--discussing the situation with that parent,
--asking some other to comment to the Santa Claus parent,
--writing to the Santa Claus parent.

Another phase of this content area is the needs and feelings of the Santa Claus parent. Here the members should be encouraged to bring out some of the feelings this parent may be having: loneliness, loss of affection, a need to make up for absence, fear of total loss of child's affection.

5. Dating -- The specifics of this content area are extensive. Dynamics include: sex role identity, personal freedom, and modeling. Care should be taken here to be sure to deal with as many variables as possible.

Common to all changed families is the resultant search for other opposite sex friends and prospective mates. (Some partners choose to remain single, but the number is extremely small and even these must deal with sexual needs.) The adolescent is in the midst of a search for appropriate sex-role behavior and looks to parents and other adults for models. These needs and the needs of the parent must be aired. At times the pattern of behavior of a 35-year-old divorcee and her 14-year-old daughter are quite similar as regards dealing with men and boys. And a 14-year-old son may base much of his behavior on the apparent reaction he sees in his mother to specific behaviors by men and the actions of his father. A key to readiness for dealing with this content area comes when members say, "My mom tells me not to date some guys but I can't tell her who to date...," "My mom's boyfriend is a creep...," "My dad is 44 and he has a 27-year-old girlfriend..."

6. Holidays -- Group members benefit from discussing the many plans they

make for splitting their time over vacations. Positive and negative aspects of these plans should be dealt with. Most of the members will enjoy this interaction, and they seem to feel it's important.

7. Visitations -- In this area the feelings of the students are important. The issues include:

   --Where does the visiting parent stay?
   --How often can I see dad?
   --Can I spend more time with dad?
   --Each time he/she comes, my mom/dad gets mean.

   It is important to discuss the needs the visiting parent might have (work, money, dates, fears).

8. Responsibility and freedoms -- Students can be informed of the interaction of freedom and responsibility and its effect upon them. Here the student can be presented with the element of each factor in the other (e.g., "I can do whatever I want after school, but my dad wants me to have supper ready when he gets home from work.") The fact is that students in one-parent and even reconstituted homes have more freedom to do as they wish and more demands from the family at the same time. An emphasis on responsibility to and for the self is also necessary. These students are given a more adult (mature) environment; dealing successfully with it is the issue.

9. Custody -- The students are full of questions regarding this issue. Generally they will point out many of the most significant facts, but be sure to include:

   --the history from all-dad to all-mom and now some-dad and the cause factors,
   --legal concerns and trends,
   --How much voice does the child have?
   --What placement is best (financial,social-emotional, educational)?
   --Can placement change?

10. Financial change in the new family -- This content area should focus on specifics if possible to permit the student insight into the economic stature of the family. Share contemporary prices for such things as housing, auto, insurance, etc., to place the family situation in perspective. Discussion of ways to support the family effort is warranted.

11. Reunification fantasies -- This concern will surface in the discussion of "bargaining," but its importance warrants a second look. Focus on the positive and negative aspects of these fantasies.

12. The custodial parent as the "bad guy" -- Commonly the child holds some resentment for the parent he/she is living with. The child may be overly hostile and resistant. This may be due in part to the "good guy" (non-authoritative, free) who comes and goes from the family with minimal responsibility. The child's views are inhibiting and cause self-defeating behavior. Open airing of the dynamics of the situation, specifics from students, and some reorganization of thinking on this concern is in order.

13. Group dynamics -- When appropriate, the group should be advised of the "process" the group is involved in now. This should occur on a regular basis as the group matures.

14. Other students' coping -- Throughout the sessions, the group should be directed to listen to and/or seek out other students who are handling the changed family quite well. The students should also be informed that many have done well through this crisis and insure them that they can also.

15. "Parents are People" -- Students need to become aware of the major and

minor needs and drives which operate on adults in general and their parents specifically. In this concern area, such things as companionship (same age), love, money, fulfilling work, hobbies, free time, privacy, and pampering should be discussed. The adolescent child is selfish as a function of age, but it is imperative that he/she gains some insight into parent needs to aid the functioning of the family. It is important to have the students discuss parents in an objective fashion. Their subjective feelings should not be denied, but objectivity must be stressed to permit new understandings.

16. Love, marriage, and me -- Students are very concerned about the effects their parents' action has on them related to dating, sex, love and marriage. Concerns such as the following are common:

> "I don't know if I'll ever marry."
> "You can't trust guys."
> " I'll get married when I am 30 but not before."
> "I don't want to get too close to any girl or I'll end up getting married."
> "I wonder if I'll be just like my dad or mom?"
> "If my girlfriend knows about my parents, she will break up."
> "How can you be sure you have the right mate?"

In this area it is important to point out the 66% of the population who succeed as couples. Have the members look outside to the many positives of coupling. Consideration of alternative life styles is also necessary. Values related to this content area are many and the students will bring out most of them. Use of "Values Clarification" techniques and concepts is proper here.

17. Divorce, marriage, and the law -- The issue here is, "Should society do anything to deal with divorce?" Although this discussion is removed and cognitive, it serves to permit students to formulate personal perspectives on the concern which will most likely be present at their

adulthood. The presence or absence of children in the family is of major significance to the students. Discussion of this phenomenon should occur.

18. Fears -- Have students discuss specific fears they feel as a result of the new (or different) family situation. These real or imagined fears vary a great deal among children but seem to be very significant determinants of feelings and behaviors.

19. Siblings old and new -- A major concern is dealing with brothers and sisters from the original and/or reconstituted family. These concerns involve all the typical sibling problems of the stable family and more. Due to the availability of only one parent or the introduction of a new adult (parent) and perhaps new siblings (step-brothers and/or sisters), the child feels much more stress related to parental attention. These concerns need to be aired by all group members.

20. Mom as dad, dad as mom -- Students need sensitized to the parents' feelings that he/she must act as both parents. Here the students can discuss ways to take that "both-parent" pressure off mom or dad.

21. Empty time -- Due to the one-parent structure, many hours may be spent at home alone while mom/dad is at work or otherwise out. Leisure time activities available in the community must be shared. Positive new relationships within the group can be encouraged for the outside. The more open/free child in the group should be encouraged to generalize her/his new skills to other situations.

22. Step-people -- discussion of the literature (which abounds) on relationships between step-parents and step-children. Much is said about the behavior of the child which may result. Parallels to personal

situations are the focal point. This content area should provide the student with a more complete world view of her/his problems.

23. Literature -- Present the group with three works written for the purpose of helping students cope with a changing family.

    Richard A. Gardner, The Boys and Girls Book About Divorce (New York: Bantam Books, 1970).

    Arlene Richards and Irene Williams, How To Get It Together When Your Parents Are Coming Apart (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1976).

    John Sheridan, Changing Family Handbook.

24. Adolescent psychology -- Throughout the group sessions the leader should introduce cognitive information about adolescent needs and dynamics. These cognitive bits of information should be tied to specific experiential incidents related by the students (e.g., self-concept formation, power of peer pressure, values conflicts, etc.).

25. Job information -- Financial needs of the family often warrant an effort at some type of job placement for the children to help offset the new income level. (These jobs may be through CETA, Job Corps, other state and federal programs, and local resources.)

26. Academic skills -- Any systematic program for time organization, study skills, test-taking, etc., can be offered. This content area generates some individual sessions on academic success.

27. Child-rearing -- discussion of how each member feels he/she would raise her/his children (if he/she has children). What works with you and what does not and why.

28. Affirmative action for increased self-concept -- introduction of concepts designed to alter the student's self-statements from negative to positive. Homework related to this task should be made (e.g., "All

of us will make up a self-slogan about how we like ourselves."). Positive bombardment should be used in the group, and students should be urged to generalize the resultant positive feelings. Have students say hello when they see each other outside of the group.

The process (how the group behaves) is critical to how much the group can do. Appropriate process permits maximum growth to each individual and the group. The flow of the group should be rather free. Interaction should be permitted to occur without intervention, provided the general issues are content.

The leader should permit from three to five minutes of open talk before attempting to move the group to work. At that time, he/she may: introduce a specific content concern; ask specific members what they feel is important to talk about today; general discussion on what should be the content; or greet the group and pull back to let the content evolve. (Be sure homework is considered.) The major factor of concern is that the group get to work on content at some point. The leader should be able to make a judgment about the group style. The work time should go on until there is three-five minutes left in the group session. At this point, the leader can: ask a member to summarize the session; summarize the session her/himself or ask a volunteer to summarize (permit each member to have a turn) and supplement to insure clarity. Homework should be assigned after this summarization.

The process of the group should follow the pattern suggested by Mahler (1969).

Involvement - easy, slow start, 1-5 sessions. In this phase, the group should explore goals and expectations. The leader should guard against "too deep-too soon" revelations to allow all members to feel safe.

Transition - evolution-working, 3-10 sessions. This stage seems to be signaled by a concern over how confidentiality will be established. (At

times, this issue comes up a bit before transition.) More personalized content is now appropriate.

Working - this is the group in full process, 8-19 sessions. During this phase, the group gets into serious "here and now" discussions and other interaction revolving around real personal issues. Content issues should be brought forth in this stage.

Ending - this is the final 1-2 sessions. A "graduation" activity is in order (camping, hike, party, etc.). Students should be reassured that they have access to the leader and they should be encouraged to keep up current relationships if possible. Statements of evaluation should be sought by each member in a going-around fashion.

Throughout the sessions, the group should be kept aware of where they seem to be and where they may be going in terms of group dynamics. As the group matures, members should be asked their perception of the process level and have these perceptions checked by the leader.

At times, the suggested flow of group process may need supplemented. When it becomes apparent that the group needs special structuring to insure development, the counselor might select an exercise from one of the works listed below:

Sidney B. Simon, Leland W. Howe, and Howard Kirschenbaum, Values Clarification: A Handbook of Practical Strategies for Teachers and Students (New York: Hart Publishing Co., Inc., 1972).

J. William Pfeiffer and John E. Jones, A Handbook of Structured Experiences for Human Relations Training, Vols. I-VI (La Jolla, Calif.: University Associates, Inc., 1972-1979).

John E. Jones and J. William Pfeiffer, The 1972 Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators (La Jolla, Calif.: University Associates, Inc., 1972). (This Handbook is published annually and can be cited up to 1979.)

(A counselor with a modest amount of group counseling experience will be aware of other structured activities or sources for such activities.)

Monitoring Your Group's Development

In order to keep tuned in to the dynamics of your group, a systematic review of the process and content of each session is warranted. Many approaches could be used to this end, depending on the counselor's preference. The system offered below may be helpful.

Process monitoring is supported by the use of a Process Monitor Sheet which is simply a subjective review of the group session (see Figure 1). The Content Monitor Sheet is a listing of the 28 content issues listed earlier with a grid work to permit tally marks (see Figure 2). Each time an issue is discussed, the counselor can mark the proper content row under the date of the session. Different marks may be used to indicate if an issue was introduced by a student or a counselor. The counselor may wish to let each tally mark equal 5 or 10 minutes of discussion. In this way, the total amount of time spent on each issue can be tabulated. Some counselors may wish to use a tally mark to indicate the introduction of an issue only. The number of times an issue is introduced is of major importance. If an issue comes up three or more times in the course of the group (no matter how long, as the group decides its need for discussion), the group leader can feel confident that each member has had a chance to air feelings.

Figure 1

Process Monitor Sheet

Date _____

Absent members -

Description of content covered -

Analysis of process (what phase of development is the group in) -

Homework assigned -

Homework check from previous session -

Figure 2

Content Monitor Sheet

Content	Dates							Totals
1. Reaction phases								
2. Social problems								
3. Aggression								
4. "Santa Claus" parent								
5. Dating								
6. Holidays								
7. Visitation								
8. Responsibility								
9. Custody								
10. Financial change								
11. Reunification								
12. Custodial parent								
13. Group dynamics								
14. Others' coping								
15. "Parents are People"								
16. Love, marriage, and me								
17. Divorce, marriage, the law								
18. Fears								
19. Siblings								
20. Mom as dad, dad as mom								
21. Empty time								
22. Step-people								
23. Literature								
24. Adolescent psychology								
25. Job information								
26. Academic skills								
27. Child-rearing								
28. Affirmative action								

Please enter an "X" if the content is introduced by a group member and a "√" if you introduce it.
After entering a "X" or an "√", please enter a 1 if the content was discussed for less than 10 minutes or a 2 if the discussion went from 11-20 minutes.

Evaluation of the Group

Although this is the last section of this presentation, it is not the least significant. The success of your group depends upon the criteria you select for evaluation. Again, several works are listed as resources for structuring your planned evaluation.

The works by Clarence A. Mahler and Merle M. Ohlsen cited earlier contain valuable discussions of research and evaluation of group counseling.

H. Allen Dye, Fundamental Group Procedures for School Counselors, eds. Shelby C. Stone and Bruce Shertzer, Guidance Monograph Series, Series II: Counseling (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1968).

Donald R. Atkinson, Michael J. Furlong, and Dean S. Janoff, "A Four-Component Model for Proactive Accountability in School Counseling," The School Counselor 26 (March 1979): 222-228.

Harvey S. Leviton, "Consumer Feedback on a Secondary School Guidance Program," The Personnel and Guidance Journal 55 (January 1977): 242-244.

Leo Goldman "Toward More Meaningful Research," The Personnel and Guidance Journal 55 (February 1977): 363-368.

Everette Q. Knapper, "Counselor Accountability," The Personnel and Guidance Journal 57 (September 1978): 27-30.

Some of the most apparent dependent variables to observe are generated by the literature on "changing family" living. These variables include: grade point average, behavioral problems, self-concept, emotional control, sex role identification, understanding of typical problems of a changing family, school attendance, and cooperation at home.

A school counselor may wish to choose one or more of the following sources of evaluative information:

1. Consumer - In this case, the counselor may ask the student, parent(s), teachers, and others what they feel about the group's success. (This can be structured around the suggested dependent variables or left open-ended.)

2. Outcome - The counselor may wish to keep some objective accounting of changes in the behavior of the students (pre-post control group is one example.)

3. Programmatic - The counselor may wish to state "what he/she is going to do" throughout the program, record what he/she actually did, and base a success rating on the comparison of the two.

Which of the evaluations the counselor selects is dependent upon the work environment in which he/she is situated. Ideally, all these should be considered but if the consumer has clout in your district, option 1 might be best.

If you can get the logistical support for a "neat" research evaluation, option 2 is good. At times, the most important thing is to spell out what you plan to do, receive approval, and prove you did what you said you would. Option 3 would be most useful here.

The suggestions on the preceding pages are based on a combination of personal/professional experiences and on literature from the field. Some readers may choose to use this presentation as a guidebook to group counseling with children from changing families, while others will see it as one of many resources for development of a group counseling program.

Please consider sharing your successes, shortcomings, and other significant information on counseling children from changing families.

G.M. Gazda, ed., Basic Approaches to Group Psychotherapy and Group Counseling (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1968).

Clarence A. Mahler, Group Counseling in the Schools (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1969).

Thomas L. Hozman and Donald J. Froilard, "Children Forgotten in Divorce," The Personnel and Guidance Journal 55 (May 1977): 530-533.

APPENDIX C

(This handbook was modified for use in the study)

BIBLIOTHERAPY HANDBOOK*

By

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Counselor

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*To be used with the "Structured Group Counseling Handbook"

This handbook was prepared for use by the school counselor in dealing with students living in a changing family. The focus of this presentation is intervention through bibliotherapy in a small group setting but much of its content may be employed in individual counseling contacts.

Bernstein (1977) defined bibliotherapy as "the self-examination and insights that are gained from reading no matter what the source" (p.31). A differentiation between implicit (bibliotherapy which is not necessarily systematic) and explicit (bibliotherapy conducted by a trained therapist) is made in Bernstein's work. The trained school counselor can deliver "explicit bibliotherapy" when he/she meets with students regularly to offer and review specific readings on a content issue of importance. In this case, works will relate to "life in a changing family" (changing family in this presentation includes any family which has undergone breakdown, divorce, separation, remarriage, and/or restructuring of roles). It is advisable that the counselor develop the list of readings to use in the bibliotherapy with the support of a trained librarian.

The following works are suggested as valuable selections for children from changing families:

Richard A. Gardner, The Boys and Girls Book About Divorce (New York: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1970).

Arlene Richards and Irene Willis, How to Get it Together When Your Parents are Coming Apart (New York: McKay, 1976).

John Sheridan, Changing Family Handbook.

Selection of readings is dependent on the developmental state of the potential client. At times, other media presentations may be more desirable than readings. A number of slide tapes and filmstrips are available

from commercial organizations. An excellent video tape is available from the Public Television Network called Family Matters which is one of a series called "Self-Incorporated." Family Matters is a 15-minute program which presents a "good" and a "bad" divorce and some of the dynamics of a "bad" divorce on the child involved. Whatever media is selected for use, the counselor must become very familiar with it before asking the clients to review it.

The proper selection of media for a target population is the first step of explicit bibliotherapy. The counselor must then determine what behaviors he/she must take to insure successful bibliotherapy. The following list of behaviors is offered as a guide to the counselor planning explicit bibliotherapy.

1. Don't intrude with unwanted discussion.
2. Listen to the clients.
3. Listen with empathy.
4. Know the developmental level of the children.
5. Be reasonably tolerant.

The behaviors listed read as if from a work on group counseling. In fact, bibliotherapy conducted in groups is group counseling with the readings functioning as the content of the groups.

Bernstein (1977) suggests that reading "offers an opportunity to identify with others, helps children realize they are not alone, extends horizons, aids the catharsis process, leads to insight, and facilitates the sharing of problems." Each of these potential outcomes of "reading" can be established as an objective for the bibliotherapy program for children of the changing family.

This intervention is suggested for school counselors who find the demands on their time do not permit a more extensive time commitment to this population. As opposed to a group counseling program which requires meetings every week for 12-16 weeks, a bibliotherapy program might include four or five meetings over the same period of time. The same attention to evaluation is required for this intervention as is required for the structured changing family counseling (see the presentation on evaluation in the SGC Handbook).

If bibliotherapy is selected instead of SGC, the counselor must realize that the level of interaction of the group will not evolve to the level expected in group counseling. Bibliotherapy, as outlined in this Handbook, is more closely associated to group guidance than group counseling because it is primarily cognitive. A more intensive bibliotherapy is not suggested because if a school counselor has the time to meet on a weekly basis with the clients, group counseling appears to be the better option. Perhaps the optimum program would be group counseling supplemented with explicit bibliotherapy, or group counseling supplemented with implicit bibliotherapy.

The suggestions on the preceding pages are based on a combination of personal/professional experience and on literature from the field. Some readers may choose to use this presentation as a guidebook to explicit bibliotherapy with children from changing families, while others will see it as one of many resources for development of a bibliotherapy program.

Please consider sharing your successes, shortcomings, and other significant information on bibliotherapy with children from changing families.

Joanne E. Bernstein, Books to Help Children Cope with Separation and Loss (R.R. Bowker Company, 1977).

APPENDIX D

Changing Family Handbook

by John T. Sheridan

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In America today thousands of kids live with only one parent, or with two parents, one of which is adopted. And sometimes they live with two, four, or more adopted brothers and sisters. It seems that the family in the United States is no longer the standard Mom, Pop, Sis and Jr. it was once thought to be. Today many kids have different last names than their parents. In fact it is likely that one-third of the kids you meet are from homes where the parents have separated or divorced. Knowing this is often helpful because so often you feel like you are alone with your problem.

In the next few pages you will read of 24 issues which were commonly brought up by kids in discussion groups over the past five years. Some of the issues may be exactly what you are concerned about, while some may be of little matter to you. They are included to give you an idea of the many concerns of kids from "Changing Families."

1. When you lose someone important to you by death, separation, or divorce, you can expect to go through five stages of reaction. These five things happen to almost everyone, young or old, when they lose someone.

Denial -- When this happens, you try to pretend that nothing has changed. You often keep the truth from your friends, or even lie about what has happened.

Anger -- The anger you get over loss is hard to direct. You are mad at the lost person and at those you have. Usually your anger comes from feeling that you have been mistreated.

Bargaining -- Often after loss of a parent by divorce, you may think of ways to get your parents back together. You may work on ways to have them meet or see each other when they don't

want to.

Depression -- When your bargaining does not work, you often become very sad. You feel like you can't even laugh anymore. You may mope around finding it hard to get interested in anything.

Acceptance -- The depression may seem like it will go on forever, but usually you will come out of it and realize that you will be living without the lost person and that things can go well anyhow. [This section is a summary of an article by Hozman and Froilard, "Children Forgotten in Divorce, The Personnel and Guidance Journal 55 (May 1977): 530-533.]

Can you tell which of the five stages you are in now? It is often helpful to know.

2. Often you feel odd or different when your parents divorce. Sometimes you feel that friends will feel uncomfortable around you or even avoid contact with you because of your parents' situation. You need to remember that you are not different because of the divorce. You may have new feelings and problems but your friends will be able to understand. The main reason you feel odd is because you keep telling yourself it's odd to have only one parent at home. It's not odd! A large number of the kids in America live in one-parent homes.

3. When you lose a parent, you and others in your home may become more tense. Sometimes members of your family become more physical with one another. Sometimes friends of your brothers or sisters, mom's or dad's, may abuse you or other members of your family. You may find yourself being more aggressive with members of your family. What can you do when these things happen?

If physical abuse occurs in your home, you need to have a plan for how to avoid it if it becomes too serious. First, you should have a place close to home where you can go right away when someone becomes too physical. A neighbor, relative, or friend who lives close to you should be sought out. If you need to go to a place close by for help, you can say that someone in your house is very upset and you are afraid you might get hurt. You can ask to stay there until you feel it is safe to go home.

Second, you should know several phone numbers:

The local police _____

The County Children's Services _____

The Child Abuse Hotline _____

Your doctor _____

Your clergyman _____

Your school counselor and/or teacher _____

Any one of these people should be able to help you if you have to stay away from home for more than a few hours because of physical aggression.

Third, you should seek out the help of one of the people on the list above to find ways to help stop the aggression in your home. They can do this by having experts in these problems get involved with you and/or your whole family. These experts deal with this kind of problem alot and have many ways to get to a solution. If you feel that physical aggression is a serious problem in your home, please seek out help now!

4. "Santa Claus parent" is a term used to describe the parent (usually the one who no longer lives with you) who tries to use material gifts to make up for affections which may have been lost. If this happens to you, there are two questions you should think about.

a. How can you make the "Santa Claus parent" realize you don't need so many material things?

b. How can you help the "Santa Claus parent" know that you understand his or her feelings of loneliness, absence, and fear of loss of affection?

Students in discussion groups have offered several possible ways to solve these two questions. Some said they might continue to let the parent shower them with material things (this action seems to be unfair!) Others said they have commented on the type of gift they desired. In this way, they could tone down what the parent was getting for them. Another way to solve the problem found by some kids was to set up visits so that spending on material things is less feasible (stay home, go for a nature walk, bike ride away from stores, etc.)

If you feel comfortable, you might try to discuss the whole issue with the parent. Some kids are unable to talk with their parent about the problem but they ask someone else (parent at home, a friend, etc.) to mention the problem to the parent.

A final suggestion is to write a letter to the "Santa Claus parent" about the problem. This allows you both to get ready for a discussion if it is still necessary.

5. Dating often becomes more of a problem in a single parent home than in a two-parent home. This may be the result of the loss of one of the persons who helps you learn about the process of dating. Mothers and fathers have a great deal to do with the dating habits of their children. When one is gone, the kids have less direction and only one significant adult to use as a model.

While the kids in the family grow up to the age where they are interested in members of the opposite sex, the new single parent often gets involved in the same behavior after the loss of a mate. This development can leave all members of the family who are "dating" in a confused state. The parent has to be extra careful in her/his actions when dating. Anything the parent does might influence your own dating behavior. The fact is that at times, a 35-year-old parent and a 13-17-year-old son or daughter are involved in nearly the same dating behaviors. It is important for the parent and the kids to discuss their dating concerns openly. You have to help your parent understand your feelings about the whole matter. Sometimes the dating parent has difficulty explaining his or her freedom of dating behavior compared to yours. When this happens, try to keep your parent's feelings in mind.

6. As a member of a changing family you may find holidays and vacations difficult. You may spend some time at home with one parent and then travel to see your other parent. If you approach this experience with a good attitude, you can make it quite enjoyable. It is more confusing and takes more energy than staying at home, but it gives you the opportunity to share with each of your parents in a special way.

If you never see the lost parent, you do not find this "split time" problem,but you may find that you have to set up a schedule for yourself which allows the parent you live with to have some time of his or her own over the holiday or vacation.

7. Another issue related to holidays and vacations and even weekends is the "visitation." In some cases, the courts decide how often and where

you can meet with the absent parent, but in most cases these arrangements are worked out by your parents. You should try to help out in this planning by keeping in mind the problems each of your parents has with their time. At times, you will have to permit visitations when they are good for your parents even when you would rather they were at a different time. If an absent parent wants to visit with you, it is very important to make it work out.

8. As a member of a changing family, you may find that you have more freedom to use your time the way you see fit. You may have only one parent to organize your time for you. This freedom is often tied to more responsibility for the operation of the home.

In one discussion group a few years ago, a boy was talking about all of his free time when he realized that he had a large number of things he "had" to do before he could use his freedom. Such things as cooking meals, doing dishes, doing the laundry, or watching brothers and sisters are examples of things you have to do before you can go off on your own. Keep in mind that the better you handle the responsibilities, the more freedom you will have.

9. Who you live with is also a major concern for the changing family. Custody, which is the legal term, is often an important issue. At times, it has to be resolved in a court and sometimes the family works out the arrangements. Regardless of how your situation was worked out, you need to know that the question is never really over. The courts, and your parents, are responsible for your growth and development and if the living arrangements are not set up in your best interest, they will make changes. You

should also know that you must do all that you can to make an arrangement work well. Usually you are placed with one or the other parent for very good reasons and a change is not always practical.

10. When a family goes through a change, such as divorce, the money situation often changes. You may have to move to a different house or apartment. Your mom may have to go to work (if she is not already working). In general, you have less money available to you. At times, kids get mad about having less money and may even take it out on the parent they live with, but if you keep a good outlook you will realize that you can deal with it.

Be sure to speak to someone in the school or church or your doctor about this issue. There are many ways that you can earn money for yourself to help out the family problem. Don't be afraid to speak out. It's the best way to get help.

11. You may find yourself wishing for your parents to get back together. This is not like when you were "bargaining" right after the break-up but later when you are handling the situation pretty well. These "reunification fantasies" are common to alot of kids. It's kind of a hope for the good old days. Often when you look deeper into the good old days, you remember that they may not have been so good. In fact, in most cases they were not good old days at all.

If you work at it, you can get closer to both of your parents. Just because they don't feel compatible does not mean you can't still have both. Sure it's tough, but if it's important you will make it work.

12. The "bad guy" parent is often the one you live with. This parent has the sole responsibility for your growth most of the time and that often causes hassles. The absent parent is not involved in many of the everyday problems of the home, so you see that parent as the "good guy." It may help to know that in almost all cases, kids feel this same way for a while. In most of these cases, the kids begin to realize that the custodial parent has much more to tend to than the absent parent and they begin to accept the parent's role as one which must be carried out.

Some kids have said that the best way they know to keep the custodial parent from becoming too tough is to help out at home as much as possible. They say this allows the parent to relax more and think things through. It's worth a try!

13. You may have already found yourself meeting other people from changing families. This seems to be common in many cases. Kids can be very helpful to other kids if they approach it properly. You can see who seems to be coping well with their situation and who is not. Seeking ideas and advise from those who are doing well and sharing these ideas (and some ideas of your own) with kids having more problems than you is a good system. You can decide which ideas or advise might work for you and give them a try. Don't forget sisters or brothers. They can be of help or maybe you can help them.

14. "Parents are People." Sometimes the parents of a changing family are overlooked by their children. This may occur because the kids are so involved in their own problems that they forget about their parents. Just as you want your parents to think about your needs, so should you think

about theirs. It might be a good idea to ask each of your parents about such things as companionship (company of their own age), love, money, fulfilling work, hobbies, free time, privacy, and being pampered. All of these things and more are needs your parents have which must be met if they are to be happy people. You may have trouble seeing your mom or dad as a person, but they are and the more they feel happy about all their needs, the more they can help you with yours. Put a little love in their lives!

15. Have you thought much about your getting married in the future? Many students in discussion groups have pointed out their concerns on this issue. Alot of what they spoke of was common to their age group regardless of the parent situation. The problem is that when you are from a changing family, you have seen a marriage not work and you may be more sensitive to some of the problems.

Perhaps the main difference between kids from changing families and those from traditional two-parent families is the level of caution with which they consider marriage. Students from the changing family background seem to be much more guarded. They say things like, "I don't know if I'll ever get married," "I'll get married when I am 30 but not before," "I wonder if I'll be just like my dad or mom," or "How can you be sure you have the right mate? My parents were married for 16 years and it didn't work."

What the student from the changing family forgets is that 66 percent of the people do succeed in marriage. It's a good idea to look around at the many good, enduring marriages to remind yourself that it can work quite well. You should look into the things that make for good and bad marriages. You can have a fine marital experience if you go about it properly.

16. A concern shared by many people regardless of their background is "marriage, divorce, and the law." This concern is what can be done by our society to help people meet more success in marriage. Some kids and adults have suggested that they feel there is a great difference between childless marriages and marriages where kids are involved. Their feeling is that the childless marriage is of much less concern because its duration can be determined by the two adults involved. Should they choose to end their relationship, there would be no children to be affected. When children are involved in a marriage, many kids see the need for special concern. Some seem to think that married persons should have to go through some special training before they can have children. Others wish that people who marry and have children could be more sure of their commitment to each other and the children.

Rules and regulations about this issue may never be set up but you can demand things of yourself. If you feel that special training before having children is important or if you think a strong commitment to a marital partner is important, you should find out how to make sure those things happen for you. Some of the people whose phone numbers you listed earlier may be very helpful.

17. When you lose a parent, you may become afraid about losing the other parent. This fear and many others, which seem unrelated, are common to a child in the changing family. Knowing that alot of kids have these same fears may be helpful to you. Most of these fears are not real! You need to keep reminding yourself that the fears are caused by your state of mind, not things around you.

Fear is a common feeling that everyone has sometimes. What you need

to do is try to make sure that you don't have this feeling when there is no "real" reason for it.

18. As a member of a changing family, you may find that you are getting less attention by the remaining parent. Brothers, sisters, step-brothers, step-sisters, or a step-parent may be the main reason for this lack of attention. This problem is one shared by many kids from changing families. This is a real problem for a while because one parent can't spend the same amount of time with you as two parents could. You may want to give your parent a little time to adjust to her/his new lifestyle. As upset as you may become over less attention, remember that your mom or dad feels just as upset at not being able to find enough time to give you the attention you need and deserve.

If you gain a sister or brother because of your parent's remarriage, you need to do all you can to get to know each other. All of the children of a new family will find that they get less attention for a while. They need to be aware of each other's feelings.

19. You may notice the parent you live with trying to be both mother and father to you. This is caused by their feeling that you should have something of a mom and a dad. It is nearly impossible for one parent to be both mom and dad and it is very hard on a parent who tries to do it. You should tell your parent that you are aware of their problem and that you understand. Make your parent know that you don't expect her/him to be both parents. Remind her/him that you have teachers, uncles, aunts, and others who can help you get what you need from the role of the absent parent.

20. "Empty time" is another concern. Due to the one-parent structure, many hours may be spent at home alone while mom or dad is at work or otherwise out. You need to find out what leisure time activities are available in your community. You should contact places like the YMCA, YWCA, local recreation offices, and your school.

21. Many people have studied the relationship between step-parents and step-children. This concern has been studied a great deal because it can be a problem relationship. A step-parent is one who has a relationship with your parent but may or may not have one with you. In some cases, the kids in a home may even keep a parent from marriage with a certain person because they don't get along.

You must realize that your parent has feelings which are important. Sometimes your parent's feelings for a person may not be understood by you. If you love your parent, you will see the need for you to try to accept a person because she/he does. You need to share your concerns but your parent will have to make the decision about that person.

The main point to remember is to talk to your parent about the person who may become your new step-parent. Too often the children of a family wait until after their parent remarries and then, instead of talking about their feelings, they begin to misbehave to make their point. Talking about the situation is a much better idea!

22. Some books which you might want to read are listed below. Kids have said they really liked each of them.

Boys and Girls Book of Divorce, Richard A. Gardner
How to Get it Together When Your Parents are Coming Apart, Arlene Richards and Irene Willis
It's Not the End of the World, Judy Blume

Your school or community library should have copies of each of these books.

23. Sometimes when you are involved in a changing family environment, you wonder how you might want to raise a child if you were a parent. This concern is shared by almost every person regardless of family background. We all wonder if we will be able to be good parents. We wonder if we will forget lessons we have learned or if we will be unable to do the things we know we must to do a good job. You need to know that these feelings are as regular as any you might have. Doubts and fears about your ability to be a good parent are common. You should be sure to open up with these feelings and discuss them so you can get other ideas. Sharing feelings about any issue can help you deal with the situation better.

24. A major problem for any student from a changing family background is poor performance in school. Often a student who does very well becomes so upset that he/she feels unable to keep up the good work. Students may find their grades in school, even their attendance at school, dropping. The danger is that you enlarge your problem rather than take control of it. Sure it's hard to deal with a separation or divorce, but avoiding your life responsibilities is not the way to solve your problems. Your education is the one thing you can control in your whole existence. Believe it or not, how you do in school has more to do with your future than anything you may be involved in. Try to keep your school performance close to what it has always been.

The first issue of this handbook was about the "phases of reaction to loss" and that discussion pointed out that you will work through the loss of a parent. Poor school work may leave you with a new problem once you get control of the loss of a parent. A key rule for this and all other issues is, "Don't let your reaction to a problem today become so strong as

to give you problems in the future." A way to accomplish this is to pick out the things about you that you have control over and really go about dealing with them and let the others go as long as you can.

The 24 issues presented are by no means all that you may encounter but rather a list collected from student discussion groups. Hopefully they will be of some help to you in dealing with your own situation.

The main aim of this handbook is to get you to realize that many kids have these problems too, and the best way to solve them is to find someone who cares about you and talk out your concerns with them.